

FALL 2011

# THE MINSTREL



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# GONE. BROKEN.

by Joshua Hildebrandt

Almost agonizingly, the pale, tired sun sets into the crystalline lake, russet-gold rays mingling with icy blue and purple. Faint breezes waft off the rippling waves, carrying the briny scent through the frosted air, combing through the sparse pine needles. The wind is a sigh off the lake, a faint moan, too old to show any effort. Already the moon is conquering the eastern sky, glaring harshly at the frozen land below. A few lonely snowflakes drift in the purple air, glinting briefly before landing on the frozen grass, left over from last summer.

One snowflake lands on the tips of my fingers, intricate details melting away into a drop that runs to my palm. Once I would have felt the cold, the minor chill, but now everything is numb. Like a river frozen by the winds of winter, there is no feeling, no emotion under this mask. Once my eyes would have drifted over the growing clouds in the winter sky, not stare empty, glassy. My eyes drift close, soft black fringe shutting out the twilight sky.

How could I forget? Darkness has not been my friend since . . . since it was all taken away.

My eyes pop open, light flooding deep into my being. His voice crackles in my head, sinister, velvet, oozing contempt. I can't take this anymore.

Sitting up, I wrap my arms around my knees, burying my face in the rough but familiar texture of my jeans. If only I could forget everything, wipe the slate clean. If only the falling snow would wash everything away. Cleanse my mind from the shadows, the inky darkness that lingers, fingerprints of the past. But nothing can erase my memories.

I squeeze my eyes shut, wish for tears to come, to trickle down my frostbitten cheeks. There are none. I am frozen, like the ice that steals across the lakeshore. Frozen with the haunting voice in my head.

I can hear him laughing and I want to scream, vomit. My skin tingles and a shiver ripples up my back. It feels like he's always right behind me. Always there.

Desperation urges me to my feet, slipping on the icy rocks to the creaking wooden planks of the dock. It rocks back and forth with the waves, each step further out from the safety of land. The dark water beckons, curling its chilled fingers, whispering my name in hushed tones. One foot forward in front of the other. I can't stop. The water is an undulating surface, dark, a blank canvas. No bubbles work their way to the grey surface, no light penetrates its depths. It's an empty canvas, waiting to be painted with my thrashing screams.

The sun is gone. The sky, just like the water is black, cold, heartless. There is no moon, just a bleak smear of darker clouds close to the horizon. The water whispers, cajoling me, calling me. It wants me and I want the cold silence found in its bosom. I want to drink it all in, submerged in the murky, acrylic depths. There is no light at the rocky bottom, no noise but the loving murmur of the darkness. There is no light in the sky. There is no light in my life.

A shuddering breath works its way up my spine and through my numb lips. The plume swirls through the cold air, fading. I turn my gaze to the night sky, where one lone star shines. A lonely glimmer, dulled by rippling clouds, fighting to be seen in all the blackness.

The water whispers once more, reaching for me. Not tonight. One foot backwards behind the other. That's all I know. One more night alone, one more night like the tiny star.

Snowflakes hit my face as I ascend from the lake edge; cold water runs down my cheeks, mingling with fresh tears. The mask crumbles away and the light of the moon illuminates my eyes. Eyes full of dreams.

# UNTITLED

by John Schuurman







# UNTITLED

by Jenna Bos





fallingleaves  
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 rain  
     dreaMsmallinginto  
 rain  
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 Intoapuddle

# PUDDLE

by Taylor Kraayenbrink



# LITTLE MAN

by Geoffrey Roome

I am aware of a little man out the corner of my eye. He seems to be carrying something small within his delicate hands. He reaches out with it as if to keep it alive. I am aware of a little man.

"Little man," I say, "what is that in which you are carrying?"

"A memory," says the man. I am puzzled. He does not move, but instead takes his time at opening and closing his hand. When he smiles the wrinkles on his cheeks show his affection. I am aware of a little man.

"Little man are you certain of this?" I ask again. "What is it that you are holding?"

"A purpose," he replies. He continues with his gestures, his eyes ever fixed on his hands. His face looks younger now. I am aware of a little man.

"Little man," I say, "it will be dark soon. Don't you wish to come inside?" I reach out my hand from the place I stand.

"No," he answers. "I think I shall stay warm here." He has yet to look at me. I can only make out a few lines of his face. His wispy white hair is old and tattered, young and alive. I am aware of a great little man.



"Sir, may I come and see what you are holding?" I lean out of my door and into the cold.

"Yes, please," says the man. I head over to his side. It is warm by the man. He seems to give off a sort of comfort. I am aware of a humble little man.

"Sir, how did you get here?" I slowly open his hands.

"I came the same way you did." He is holding nothing and yet something. His hands are old and beautiful.

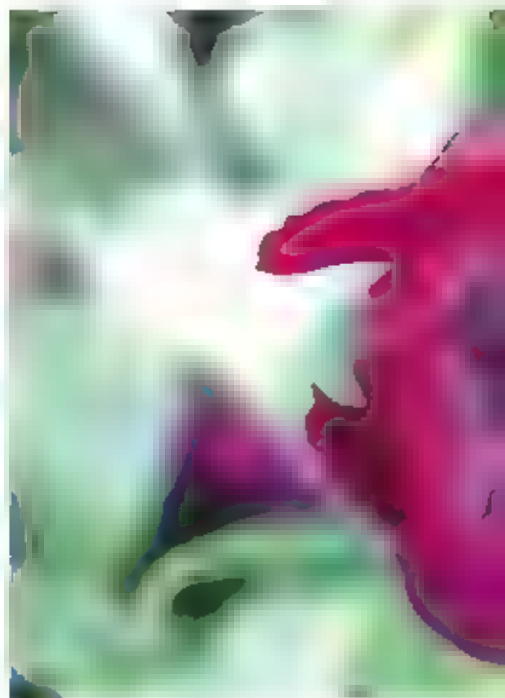
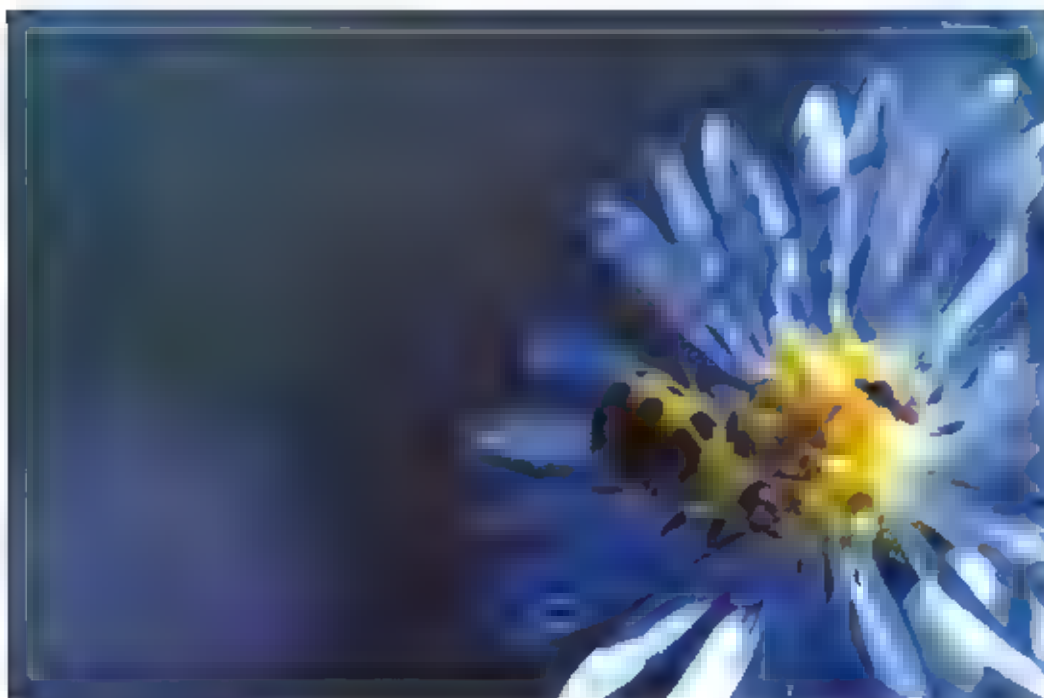
"I do not see anything here sir. Are you certain of what you have?" He nods his head yes. His eyes watch my hands enter his own. I am aware of a strong little man.

"Little man what is your name?" I feel his scars. His hands are not without pain.

"My name is not my own," he replies. He holds my hands now. "Let me show you." He closes my eyes. I am aware of a merciful little man.

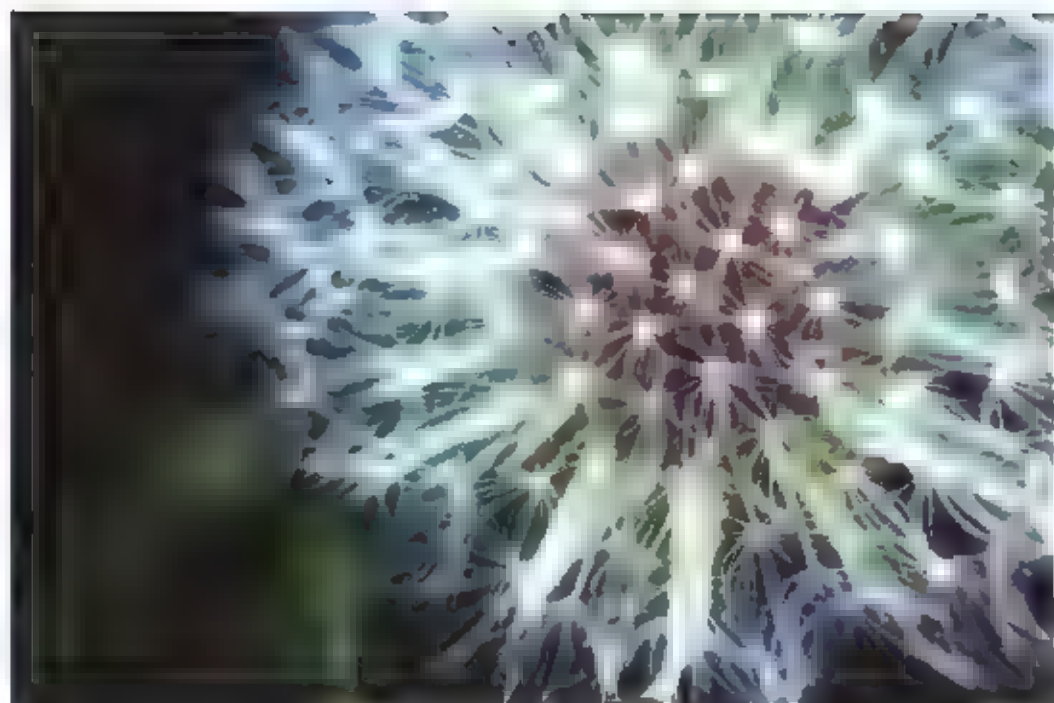
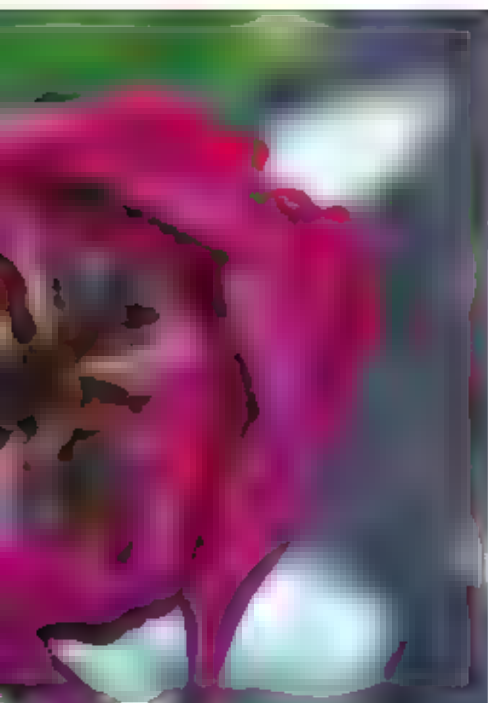
I open my eyes. I no longer see the little man. I see myself. I look down at my hands. They are most beautiful. They seem to be holding something. I am aware of a giving little man.





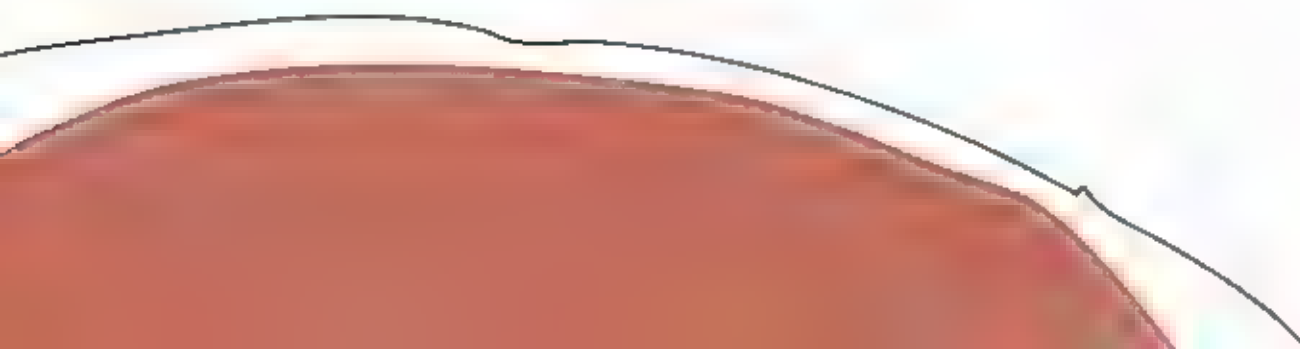
# LOVE BUGS

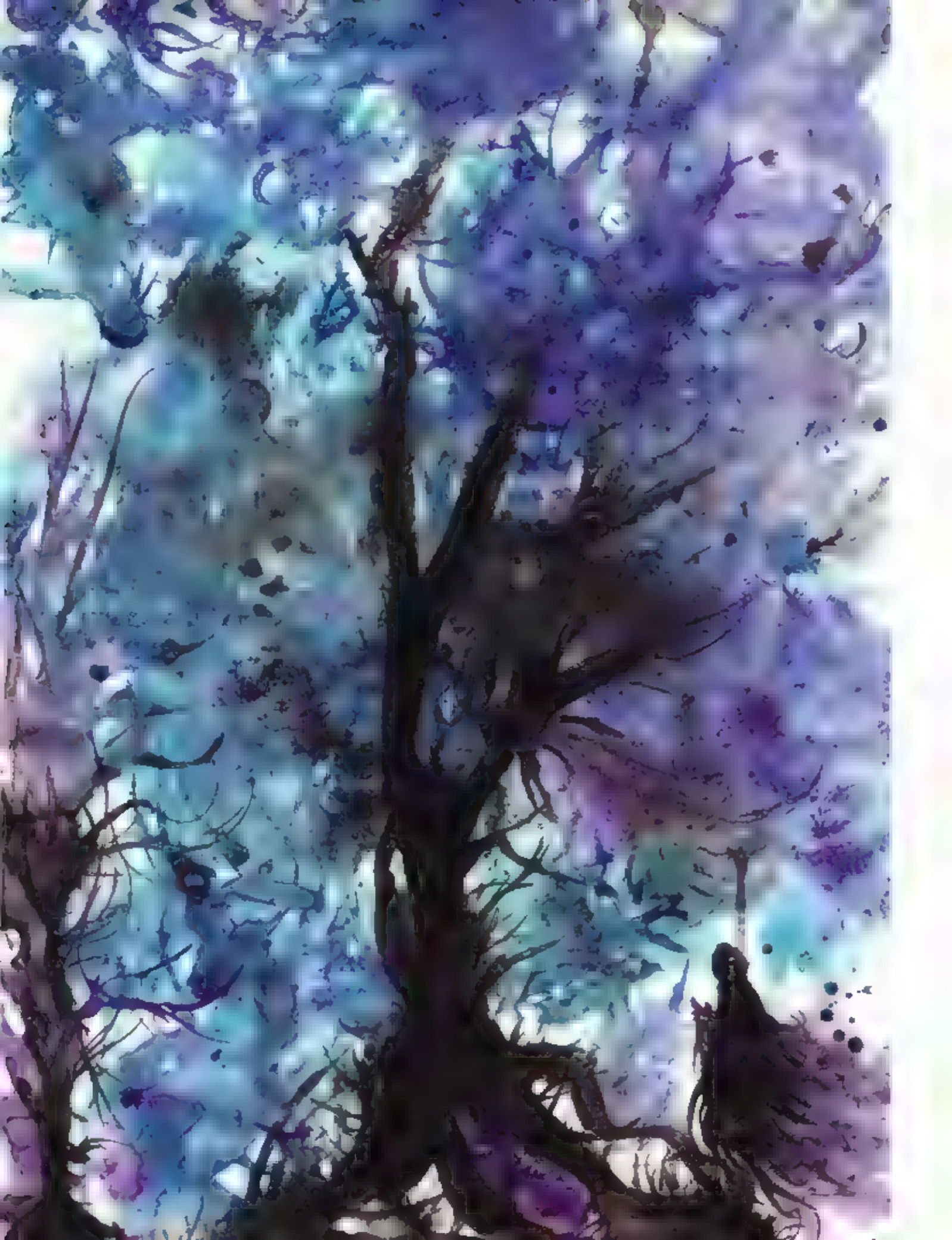
by Reagan Butler



# UNTITLED MAKE A WISH

by Reagan Butler by Reagan Butler







# SHE WILL

by Taylor Kraayenbrink

She will redefine saving you from yourself,  
mercifully restraining you from riding  
poison knife planes through the healthy pink flesh  
of the sky.

We will all wear bamboo bowtie leashes,  
and she will leave all stones unturned  
building sidewalks without a footprint.  
She will harness your whispers as sustainable energy,  
and your yawns as a potential alternative to those.  
You might want to keep them for yourself,  
but if you try, she will throw you under  
a bus, sanitary public transit, people friendly, thought activated,  
world saving:  
for the good of the people, marching dutifully down  
naturally occurring non-intrusive trails to green Eden

## AURA

by Joshua Hildebrandt

# AWAKENING DREAM

by Reagan Butler

Blind generation,  
Blinded nation,  
Blind to what we don't want to see.  
We dream of what we wish could be  
while the world is in desperate need  
and the answer is in the dreams  
of a generation fast asleep.

Don't let us fall asleep,  
don't let us close our eyes,  
don't let us lose our dreams,  
as soon as the morning shines.

Blind generation,  
Blinded nation,  
Blind to what we don't want to see  
We dream of what we wish could be  
while the world is in desperate need  
and the answer is in the dreams  
of a generation fast asleep.

We've learned  
to just close our eyes,  
to what we don't wish to see.  
We've heard to just turn a blind eye,  
but it's not that easy.

Closing our eyes and falling asleep,  
doesn't change the oppression,  
this world is in need.  
Closing our eyes and falling asleep,  
doesn't make our dreams  
into reality.

Don't fall asleep,  
don't close your eyes,  
don't lose your dreams,  
as soon as the morning shines.

As the morning dawns,  
don't let your dreams slip away.  
Open your eyes,  
and dream through the day.

Wake up and dream

# UNTITLED

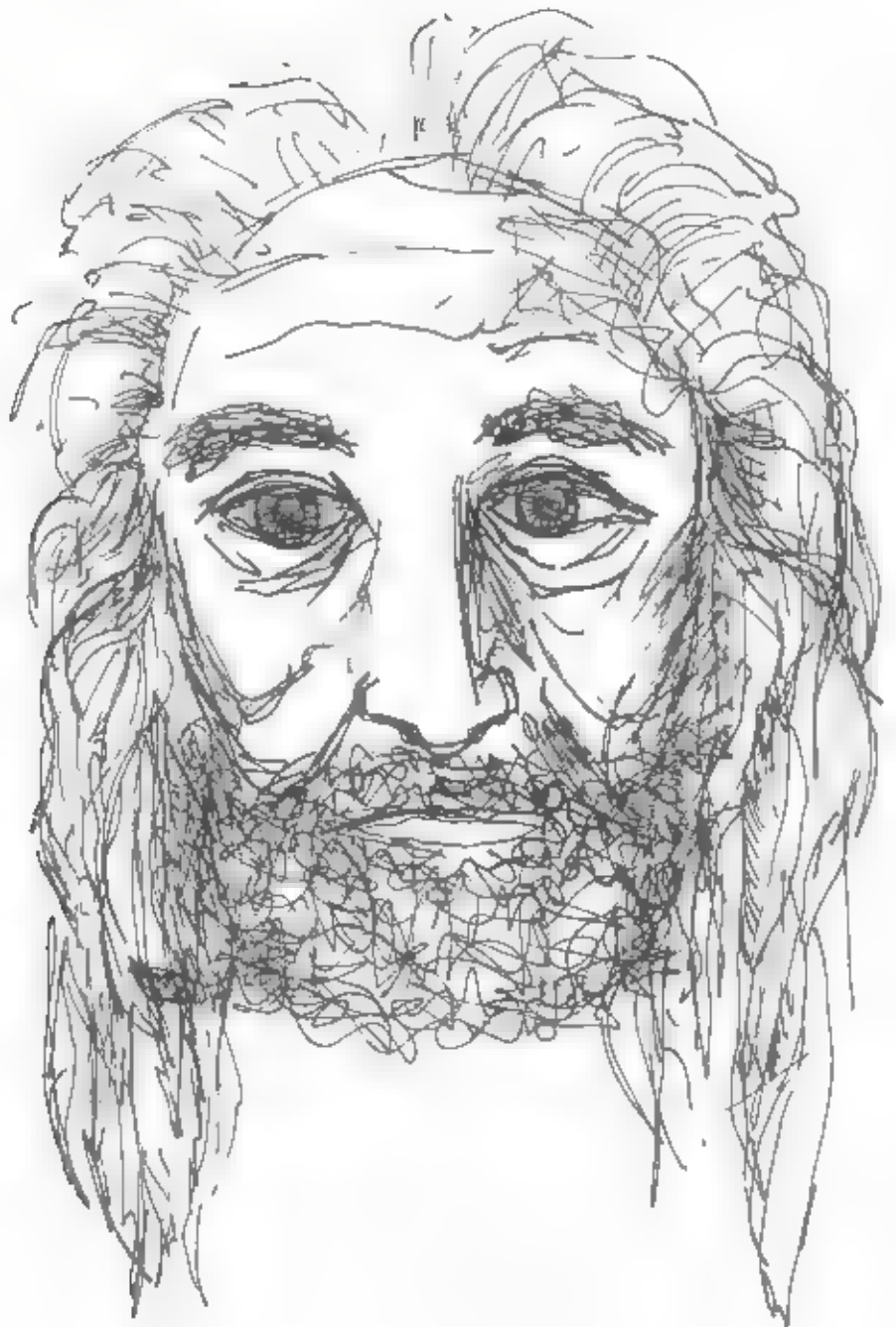
by John Schuurman





# STORIES GROWN OLD

by Jenna Bos



Comrade.

If you go, can I follow?

If you fly, will I fall?

If you kiss the sun tomorrow

Will I miss out on it all?

I am strong when you find meaning,

I am full when you grow wings.

I anticipate the fullness

Of the song in which you sing.

Let me know you as your color,

Let me see you as your smile

Let me walk along beside you

Or let us sit and wait awhile

We two will go together, yes,

We two will see it through

In the morning we'll be perfect

But for now we'll just be new.

# COMRADE

by Geoffrey Roome

# THERE IS NO WRONG SO TRAVEL ON

by Kimberly Musselman







we saw a smiling sheepdog  
down by a restaurant takeout  
door near the Coppers  
and gave him some welcome affection,  
and his owner emerged with a late dinner  
bagged, a sixty-three year old man  
who relates he took the dog upon retiring  
from Stelco three years ago, not knowing what else  
to do with himself. He is devoted to his dog  
to the extreme he has been discussed on local  
radio as an unsafe dog lover, reason being he drives  
his truck around with the giant animal on his lap.  
In welcome incidental discussion he relates with  
serene vision his intentions of moving with his dog  
to Prince Edward Island, a place, he says, where you go  
to the corner variety to grab cigarettes and you are given  
hot coffee and fresh porridge complimentary,  
along with conversation for breakfast.  
A place with no Yankees (he begs pardon for the  
expression and looks furtively around—and up, as if expecting  
a Tomahawk missile salvo in response to the insult)  
Well, some Yanks do actually intrude, and, would you believe it, erect  
fences around their cottages, combative measures otherwise  
unheard of in those parts—for The Island is a place where you  
can drive your truck down the closest beach with a cooler of beer  
and fish all night, free of big-world worries and nosy wardens  
requesting valid license with photo ID.

He'll move over there  
in good time, when his mother passes (not that he wishes the  
occurrence) , along with his dog Murphy, and a sister for him  
which he will purchase soon as well, and he will rent a farm house  
near the good variety stores and fishing.  
All this he relates happily and in long wind on a cold Wednesday night  
before dinner steadily growing colder in a takeout bag.

## BUT I NEVER CAUGHT HIS NAME

by Taylor Kraayenbrink



# SWEETY

by GLEN WILKINSON

She roams desperate  
To each corner of her cage  
For a roost in the proper plane

Only bars she finds

She flaps desperate  
To the heights of her hope  
For a floor on the ceiling

Only bars she finds

She grips desperate  
To pillars rusted within  
For a peek at the shine without

Only gold they see

She looks desperate  
To those who love her colours  
For one colourblind

Only gold they see

She digs desperate  
To rise the depths of memory  
For hope in what once was

Only hate she finds

She sings desperate  
To a tune she thinks is love  
For she never knew a love song

Only hate she hears

She listens keen  
To hear the change of key  
For still she sings

Beautifully

Keep singing,  
Sweety,  
Keep singing

# UNTITLED

by Tabitha DiDomenico









## **VENICE AT DAYBREAK**

by Kimberly Musselman

Denial is all you know  
living this life of forgotten hope  
swimming in lost desires and dreams  
when the future appears too dim to see...

Letting go of all the good you know  
watch it slide off of the tips of your fingers  
indulging in poisons for temporary relief  
your insides are upon a pedestal  
where no one can reach  
a rush of ecstasy  
dominates your mind  
flying so high  
wasting more time...

Lured by the king himself  
with no room for anyone else  
sooner than later  
you'll collide with the ground  
falling.. falling.. with no one around  
pummeled upon by the depths of darkness  
but the only way out  
is to fly again...

You are all you have time for  
running away  
and locking the door  
I've reached out my hand  
as you yank back yours  
I've played my role  
sitting back  
watching the true you unfold...

Comforting words  
flowing from your lips  
as you walk away  
leaving me behind  
returning to your make believe time  
without ever looking back  
I watch you fade out of sight  
as I linger here  
alone in this night  
wishing to return to 'my' fairy tale life...

But mine's not of poisons and lies  
but of you and of me  
and your always there  
wiping away all my tears  
but reality snaps  
and the world slowly falls into place  
and my dreary eyes  
once again don't see  
you- standing by the door- waiting for me...

## THE FAIRY TALE

by Tabitha DiDomenico





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